

TWO CONJECTURES CONCERNING PARTITIONAL  
GENERALIZED BINOMIAL COEFFICIENTS

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## 1. Introduction and summary

Constantine [2] defined partitional generalized binomial coefficients  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  (his notation was  $a_{\lambda, \mu}$ ) by means of the identity

$$C_{\lambda}(I_p + Z)/C_{\lambda}(I_p) = \sum_{k=0}^{\ell} \sum_{\mu \in \mathcal{P}_k} \binom{\lambda}{\mu} C_{\mu}(Z)/C_{\mu}(I_p), \quad (1.1)$$

where the  $C_{\mu}(Z)$  are zonal polynomials in the  $p$  by  $p$  symmetric matrix  $Z$  [3] and  $\mathcal{P}_k = \{\mu | \mu = (k_1 \geq k_2 \geq \dots \geq k_p \geq 0), \sum_{i=1}^p k_i = k\}$  is the set of partitions of the integer  $k$  into  $p$  or fewer parts. Bingham [1] showed that  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  could also be defined by means of the identity

$$C_{\lambda}(Z) \text{etr}(Z)/k! = \sum_{\ell=k}^{\infty} \sum_{\mu \in \mathcal{P}_{\ell}} \binom{\lambda}{\mu} C_{\mu}(Z)/\ell!, \quad (1.2)$$

where  $\text{etr}(Z) = \exp(\text{tr } Z)$ . Let  $P = P(Z)$  be a symmetric homogenous polynomial of degree  $k$  in the latent roots of  $Z$ . Then by analogy with (1.2) (but not with (1.1)), Bingham defined coefficients  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  by

$$P(Z) \text{etr}(Z)/k! = \sum_{\ell=k}^{\infty} \sum_{\mu \in \mathcal{P}_{\ell}} \binom{\lambda}{\mu} C_{\mu}(Z)/\ell!. \quad (1.3)$$

He gave explicit expressions for  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  for all monomials in  $s_j = \text{tr } Z^j$  of degree 5 or less. From these one could find expressions for all  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$ ,  $\mu \in \mathcal{P}_k$ ,  $k \leq 5$  using the known relationship between the  $C_{\mu}(Z)$  and the monomials in  $s_j$  (in [3], e.g.).

Based on examination of the formulas in [1] and considering other results derived there, two conjectures concerning the form of  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  for arbitrary  $\mu$  are made in Section 3. If true, these conjectures

provide the bases for two algorithms:

1. An algorithm for determining the explicit form of  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  for all  $\mu \in P_k$ ; and
2. An algorithm for determining the explicit form of  $C_\mu(Z)$  for all  $\mu \in P_k$  in terms of the monomials in  $s_j$ .

Based on these conjectures, expressions for  $\binom{\lambda}{\mu}$  have been determined for all monomials  $P$  in  $s^j$  of degree  $k \leq 7$ . The expressions found for  $C_\mu(Z)$  based on the conjectures are correct for all  $\mu \in P_k$ ,  $k \leq 8$ .

## 2. Notation

Throughout we assume  $\lambda = (\ell_1, \dots, \ell_p) \in P_\ell$ ,  $\mu = (k_1, \dots, k_p) \in P_k$ , and  $\rho = (r_1, \dots, r_p) \in P_r$ . Let  $n_k$  be the number of partitions in  $P_k$  and  $N_k = \sum_{j=1}^k n_j$ .

Monomials in  $s_j$  will be denoted by

$$\tilde{C}_\mu(Z) = \prod_{i=1}^p s_{k_i}^{p_i}, \text{ with } s_0 = 1. \quad (2.1)$$

Define column vectors of length  $n_k$  of polynomials in  $Z$  by

$$C_k = [C_\mu]_{\mu \in P_k}, \quad (2.2)$$

and

$$\tilde{C}_k = [\tilde{C}_\mu]_{\mu \in P_k}. \quad (2.3)$$

Vectors  $C_k$  and  $\tilde{C}_k$  are related by

$$C_k = U_k \tilde{C}_k \quad (2.4)$$

where  $U_k$  is a  $n_k$  by  $n_k$  matrix. The matrices  $U_k$  are known at least up to  $k = 11$ .

Define  $n_k$  by  $n_\ell$  matrices  $R_{k\ell}$  and  $\tilde{R}_{k\ell}$  by

$$R_{k\ell} = [(\lambda)_n]_{n \in \mathcal{P}_k, \lambda \in \mathcal{P}_\ell} \quad (2.5)$$

and

$$\tilde{R}_{k\ell} = [(\tilde{c}_n^\lambda)]_{n \in \mathcal{P}_k, \lambda \in \mathcal{P}_\ell} \quad (2.6)$$

Then, by (1.1) or (1.2)

$$R_{kk} = I_{n_k}, \text{ and } R_{k\ell} = 0, \quad k > \ell. \quad (2.7)$$

By (1.2) and (2.4)

$$\tilde{R}_{kk} = U_k^{-1}, \quad \tilde{R}_{k\ell} = U_k^{-1} \cdot R_{k\ell}, \text{ and } \tilde{R}_{k\ell} = 0, \quad k > \ell. \quad (2.8)$$

Define the  $N_k$  by  $N_k$  matrices  $R^{(k)}$  and  $\tilde{R}^{(k)}$  by

$$R^{(k)} = [R_{r,\ell}]_{r,\ell=1}^k \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{R}^{(k)} = [\tilde{R}_{r,\ell}]_{r,\ell=1}^k. \quad (2.9)$$

Bingham [1] introduced certain partitional coefficients  $d_k(\lambda)$  by

$$d_0(\lambda) = 1, \quad d_1(\lambda) = \ell, \quad d_k(\lambda) = \sum_{i=1}^p \sum_{j=1}^{\ell_i} (j - \frac{i-1}{2})^{k-1}, \quad k \geq 2. \quad (2.10)$$

Clearly  $d_k(\lambda)$  can be expressed as a polynomial of degree  $k$  in  $\ell_1, \dots, \ell_p$ . Define monomials of weight  $k$  in the  $d_r(\lambda)$ 's by

$$d_{\kappa}(\lambda) = \prod_{i=1}^p d_{k_i}(\lambda) . \quad (2.11)$$

Finally define  $N_k$  by  $N_k$  matrices

$$D^{(k)} = [D_{r,\ell}]_{r,\ell=1}^k \quad (2.12)$$

where the  $n_r$  by  $n_\ell$  matrices  $D_{r,\ell}$  are defined

$$D_{r,\ell} = [d_{\rho}(\lambda)]_{\rho \in \mathfrak{P}_r, \lambda \in \mathfrak{P}_\ell} . \quad (2.13)$$

### 3. Conjectured results.

Examination of the expressions for  $(\tilde{C}_n^\lambda)$  presented in [1] for all  $n \in \mathbb{P}_k$ ,  $k \leq 5$  reveals two facts:

1. The coefficients  $(\tilde{C}_n^\lambda)$  are expressible as linear combinations of partitional monomials  $d_\rho(\lambda)$ ,  $\rho \in \mathbb{P}_r$ ,  $r \leq k$ ; and
2. The only partitional monomial of weight  $k$  entering the expression for  $(\tilde{C}_n^\lambda)$  is  $g_n d_n(\lambda)/k!$  where

$$g_n = \prod_{k_i \geq 1} (k_i) . \quad (3.1)$$

Both assertions are conjectured to hold for all  $k$ . The first can be made more precise as:

Conjecture 1:

$$\tilde{R}^{(k)} = \tilde{A}^{(k)} D^{(k)} , \quad (3.2)$$

where

$$\tilde{A}^{(k)} = [\tilde{A}_{r,l}]_{r,l=1}^k, \quad \tilde{A}_{r,l} = 0, \quad r < l \quad \text{where} \quad \tilde{A}_{r,l} \text{ is } n_r \times n_l. \quad (3.3)$$

Clearly equivalent to Conjecture 1 in view of (2.8) is

Conjecture 1':

$$R^{(k)} = A^{(k)} D^{(k)} , \quad (3.4)$$

where

$$A^{(k)} = [A_{r,\ell}]_{r,\ell=1}^k, A_{r,\ell} = 0, r < \ell \text{ where } A_{r,\ell} \text{ is } n_r \times n_\ell. \quad (3.5)$$

Clearly from (3.2) and (2.8)

$$A_{\ell,r} = U_\ell \tilde{A}_{\ell,r}. \quad (3.6)$$

The second assertion above is equivalent to:

Conjecture 2:

$$\tilde{A}_{kk} = (k!)^{-1} \text{diag}[g_k]. \quad (3.7)$$

A direct consequence of Conjecture 2 and (3.6) is:

Conjecture 2':

$$A_{kk} = (k!)^{-1} U_k \text{diag}[g_k]. \quad (3.8)$$

The author has been unable to prove these conjectures. However, their plausibility is strengthened by various facts:

(a) The conjectures are true for  $k \leq 5$ .

(b) Theorem 2 of [1] states in part that, if  $P(Z)$  is a homogeneous symmetric polynomial of degree  $k$ , then

$$\binom{\lambda}{s_1^r p} = \frac{(\ell-k)(\ell-k-1) \dots (\ell-k-r+1)}{(k+r)(k+r-1) \dots (k+1)} \binom{\lambda}{p}. \quad (3.9)$$

Since  $d_1(\lambda) = \ell$ , this clearly implies that if Conjecture 1 or Conjecture 2 is true for  $\tilde{C}_k$  it is also true for  $\tilde{C}_{(n,1^r)} = s_1^r \tilde{C}_n$ .

(c) It was proved in [1] that if

$$\begin{aligned} P_{r,t}(Z) &= r! \text{ (term of degree } r \text{ in } [\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} s_j/j]^t/t!) \\ &= r! \sum_{\substack{k_1+2k_2+3k_3+\dots=r \\ k_1+k_2+k_3+\dots=t}} \frac{(s_1)^{k_1} (s_2/2)^{k_2} (s_3/3)^{k_3} \dots}{k_1! k_2! k_3! \dots} \end{aligned} \quad (3.10)$$

then

$$(p_{r,t}^\lambda) = \sum_{\rho \in P_r} f_{r-t}(\rho) (p_\rho^\lambda), \quad (3.11)$$

where  $f_{r-t}(\rho)$  is defined by

$$\sum_{t=0}^r f_{r-t}(\rho) x^t = (x)_\rho \equiv \prod_{i=1}^p \prod_{j=1}^r (x + j - \frac{1}{2}(i-1)). \quad (3.12)$$

It was further shown in [1] that

$$(n(1-z))_\lambda / (n)_\lambda = \sum_{t=0}^{\ell} \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^{t+k} z^t n^{-k} \chi \quad (3.13)$$

$$(\sum_{\rho \in P_{t+k}} f_k(\rho) (p_\rho^\lambda) + [\text{linear combination of } (p_{\rho'}^\lambda), \rho' \in P_r, r < t+k]).$$

Another expression for  $(n(1-z))_\lambda / (n)_\lambda$  in [1] is equivalent to

$$(n(1-z))_\lambda / (n)_\lambda = \exp\{ - \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^k n^{-k} d_{k+1}(\lambda) h_k(z) \}, \quad (3.14)$$

where

$$h_k(z) = \sum_{r=1}^{\infty} \frac{(k+r-1)!}{k! r!} z^r = z + \frac{1}{2}(k+1)z^2 + \dots \quad (3.15)$$

After straightforward rearrangements of (3.14) we find that

$$(n(1-z))_\lambda / (n)_\lambda = 1 + \sum_{t=1}^{\infty} (-1)^t \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^k n^{-k} \times \left( \sum_{\substack{k_1+2k_2+3k_3+\dots=k+t \\ k_1+k_2+k_3+\dots=t}} \frac{d_1^{k_1}(\lambda) d_2^{k_2}(\lambda) d_3^{k_3}(\lambda) \dots}{k_1! k_2! k_3! \dots} h_0^{k_1}(z) h_1^{k_2}(z) h_2^{k_3}(z) \dots \right). \quad (3.16)$$



Since (3.15) implies that  $h_0^{k_1}(z) h_1^{k_2}(z) h_2^{k_3}(z) \dots = z^t + O(z^{t+1})$ , if  $\sum k_j = t$ , (3.16) demonstrates that the term of highest weight in the  $d_j(\lambda)$ 's in the coefficient of  $z^{t-k}$  has weight  $k + t$  and is

$$(-1)^{t+k} \vartheta_{k+t,k} \equiv (-1)^{t+k} \sum_{\substack{k_1+2k_2+3k_3+\dots=k+t \\ k_1+k_2+k_3+\dots=t}} \frac{d_1^{k_1} d_2^{k_2} d_3^{k_3} \dots}{k_1! k_2! k_3! \dots} \quad (3.17)$$

Thus, using (3.11) and (3.13), this implies that

$$\begin{aligned} \binom{\lambda}{p_{t+k,k}} &= \vartheta_{k+t,k} + [\text{linear combination of lower order } \binom{\lambda}{p_i}] \\ &+ [\text{terms of weight } < k+t \text{ in the } d_j(\lambda)\text{'s}]. \end{aligned} \quad (3.18)$$

If Conjecture 1 is true for degrees  $< r$ , then (3.18) implies:

- (i)  $\binom{\lambda}{p_{r,t}}$  is a linear combination of monomials in  $d_j(\lambda)$  of weight not greater than  $r$ ; and
- (ii) the term of highest weight in  $\binom{\lambda}{p_{r,t}}$  is  $\vartheta_{r,t}$ . It will be observed that (i) would be implied by Conjecture 1 while Conjecture 2 predicts (ii). This further enhances the plausibility of the conjectures.

4. Using the conjectures to find  $A^{(k)}$  and  $U_k$

If we assume the truth of Conjecture 1', (3.4) implies

$$A^{(k)} = R^{(k)} [D^{(k)}]^{-1}, \quad (4.1)$$

provided  $D^{(k)}$  is invertible. Partition  $[D^{(k)}]^{-1}$  into submatrices  $D_{(k)}^{r,\ell}$  of order  $n_r$  by  $n_\ell$ ,  $r \leq k$ ,  $\ell \leq k$ . Then (4.1) and (2.7) together imply that

$$[A_{k1}, A_{k2}, \dots, A_{kk}] = [D_{(k)}^{k1}, D_{(k)}^{k2}, \dots, D_{(k)}^{kk}]. \quad (4.2)$$

This provides the basis for an algorithm for finding all the non-zero elements of  $A^{(k)}$  and hence expressions for all partitional generalized binomial coefficients of order  $\leq k$ , by successive inversion of  $D^{(1)}$ ,  $D^{(2)}$ , ... . The computation can be made easier by means of the well known method of using  $[D^{(r-1)}]^{-1}$  to compute  $[D^{(r)}]^{-1}$ , the largest matrix requiring direct inversion at any step being of order  $n_r$  by  $n_r$ . It is clear from the discussions in Section 2 that if, in the definition of  $D^{(k)}$ , we replace  $d_1^{k_1} d_2^{k_2} d_3^{k_3} \dots$ , of weight  $r$ , by  $(d_1 - r + k_1)(d_1 - r + k_1 - 1) \dots (d_1 - r + 1) d_2^{k_2} d_3^{k_3} \dots$ , then we can restate our conjectures using the redefined  $D^{(k)}$ . The matrix  $A^{(k)}$  will be different but will satisfy the same properties as there discussed. The resulting modified form of  $A^{(k)}$  has a somewhat simpler structure than as originally defined in Section 2. Moreover, there is some evidence of greater numerical stability in carrying out the algorithm described above.

From (3.6),  $\tilde{A}^{(k)}$  (with or without the definition modified as in the preceding paragraph) can be determined from  $A^{(k)}$  once the  $U_r$  are known for  $r \leq k$ . In the Appendix are entries for the (modified) matrix  $\tilde{A}^{(7)}$  computed using the algorithm discussed above.

If we assume the truth of Conjecture 2, then (4.2) and (3.8) imply

$$U_k = k! \operatorname{diag}[g_\mu^{-1}] D_{(k)}^{kk}. \quad (4.3)$$

Thus the algorithm described above also can be used to determine expressions for the zonal polynomials in terms of the  $\tilde{C}_\mu$ . Numerical computations verify (4.3) for  $k \leq 8$ , thus strengthening the plausibility of the Conjectures.

#### Appendix.

Table 1 contains the matrix of coefficients for expressing  $(k!/g_\mu)(\tilde{C}_\mu^\lambda)$  for all  $\mu \in \mathcal{C}_k$ ,  $k \leq 7$  in terms of the partitional monomials  $d_\rho(\lambda)$  as modified in Section 4. The table also contains values of  $g_\mu$ . Thus for example we find

$$\begin{aligned} \left( \begin{smallmatrix} \lambda \\ s_3 s_2 \end{smallmatrix} \right) &= (1/20)(d_3(\lambda)d_2(\lambda) - (1/4)(d_1(\lambda)-3)(d_1(\lambda)-2)d_2(\lambda) \\ &\quad - (1/2)d_2^2(\lambda) - 4d_4(\lambda) + 2(d_1(\lambda)-2)d_2(\lambda) \\ &\quad + (9/2)d_3(\lambda) - (5/8)(d_1(\lambda)-1)d_1(\lambda) + (1/4)d_2(\lambda) ) . \end{aligned}$$

Table 1 was computed using KRONOS APL on a CDC 6400. Each of the matrices  $D^{(k)}$ ,  $k = 1, \dots, 7$  was inverted using Gauss-Jordan elimination with pivoting. After multiplying the floating point values so obtained by the indicated denominators and the factor  $k!/g_\mu$ , the resulting values

were all within  $10^{-6}$  of being integers. In view of the numerical check of (4.3) for all  $k \leq 8$  (to equivalent accuracy), I feel the truth of the conjectures, at least up to  $k = 8$ , is extremely likely and would not hesitate to recommend the use of Table 1.

**Table 1.** Matrix of coefficients expressing  $(k!/g_n)(\tau_n^\lambda)$  in terms of modified monomials in  $d_j(\lambda)$ .

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